St Hartford D-6 (1813-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin M34

mere trifle. Probably the only part of the outfit that would have any commercial value at all is the black goat's-hair tent, which affords a poor shelter from the cold in winter and from the heat in summer. And along with extreme poverty there goes an astonishing lack of any sense of cleanliness or order. The tent of a Bedouin could be little more disorderly if it were taken by some giant hand, shaken like a dice box, and the contents allowed to rest where they fell. The furniture consists of few things and poor. There are the remnants of one or more cotton stuffed quilts. These are both bed and bed clothes. There are a few skins to hold drinking water and a few skin basins. Some shaped sticks are tied together to make camel saddles. The outfit will also include a copper kettle for the cooking of food, a battered coffee pot for the making of coffee and usually a wooden bowl. This bowl, which may be the only eating utensil belonging to the household, has probably never been washed in its history. At times milk is drunk out of it, and at times rice and meat are eaten from it. The grease with which it is covered has long since exceeded the absorption limit of the wood and for years has been plastered on to the outside. Under such circumstances the prevalence of disease excites no wonder; the wonder is that many maintain excellent health.

The Bedouins clothes are a loin cloth beneath and shirt above, which shirt resembles a loose nightgown and reaches to his ankles. Over this is worn an old disreputable *aba* or cloak, in cut resembling nothing so much as a college gown. All of these are usually in a state of great disrepair and show an acute need of laundering. The town Arabs, who look with scorn on the desert Bedouin, assert that when he buys a new undershirt, he puts

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the group. Yet although tribal solidarity and discipline are conspicuous features, it has been the weakness of Badawin society throughout the ages that political combinations larger than the tribe have been achieved merely for a very short time. An outstanding leader has brought together a number of tribes into one larger unit, but union has proved temporary; and more often than not on the death of the leader, his organisation has dissolved again into smaller groups. Large-scale political organisation is therefore not a feature of Badawin society, and resulting inter-tribal feuds, inveterate warfare, political instability and inconstancy have had an effect not merely on desert and steppe life, but also on that of the settled lands of the arid borders. It is also possible to see why, in the absence of strong internal political organisation, so much of the Middle East has in the past fallen under the control of outside powers.

To each tribe belong certain rights of pasture and occupation. The limits of each tribal territory are carefully defined, and generally comprise a summer and a winter camping ground. Exact size of territory usually has a certain relation to the physical force and prestige commanded by each tribe, and limits therefore vary from one period to another. Weaker tribes seek 'protection' from a larger.

As a sample of tribal division, the distribution of Badawin in Syria is given below. It should be noted that in certain instances tribal territories cross international frontiers, and thus there arise special problems of administration. Agreements have been concluded between the governments concerned, whereby nomads in effect assume temporarily the nationality of the country in which they find themselves.

Because of the necessity for constant movement, the material culture of the Badawin is poor. Chief possession of the tribesman, after his animals, is a tent, usually black, and woven of camel or goat hair. When in good repair, these tents are quite waterproof—sufficient to withstand the infrequent, but severe downpours which occur—and the size of the tent, shown by the number of tent poles used, is an indication of the affluence and social standing of the owner. The interior is divided, on the right for men, and on the left for women. One side away from the wind is usually left open, with a coffee hearth in front. The coffee hearth is the social centre of the household; and the head of the family, although leaving the entire preparation of food to his womenfolk, will himself undertake the preparation and serving of coffee. True Bedu coffee is strong, devoid of milk or sugar, but

L Dickson G-S (1933-47) 1951 MS I Kuwait
Bedouins 1934

at Wafra, so I am going to enquire his reasons for being there. Ibn Shaja'an has the unsavoury reputation of being cruel and overbearing to the Badawin, and like so many of his type—though a Mutairi by origin—he has been bred in Hufúf, and has imbibed many of the harsh characteristics of his master, 'Abdullah bin Jiluwi.* It is a curious fact that cruelty, conceit and a generally objectionable manner often spoil the character of a tribesman who for any length of time lives in a town.

We leave Kuwait at 12.30 p.m., and after a car run of 24 hours we reach Arafjan. There is a cool *shamál* blowing, but in spite of moving with it, I need a sweater and *farwah* (*the sheepskin-lined, long Badawin cloth cloak with sleeves, fashionable among the 'Anizah and Northern Badawin*). At 3 p.m. I catch the first glimpse of my camp. It is on the right of the rough track, and half a mile south of one of my previous camps of the year before. The tents are pinched among the thick *'arfaj* bushes which are a feature of Arafjan. Everything, however, is dry, and except for a few *gaghaf* bushes (*hamdh*) which are in full bloom, there is nothing green to be seen at all. No, I am wrong, for in the salty patches there are splashes of emerald green *hamm* (also one of the *hamdh* family) which show up strangely in the dry countryside.

My camp of black hair tents is pitched in a long line, each tent facing south-east:

"A" is my tent; "B" that of my servant and hummman; "C" is Salim's tent; "D" is Dhuwaihi's, the blind Azmi who resides with his two sons, Falih and Náyir (they are the shepherds); "E" is the tent of our *gafir* or neighbour, Sáleh, the Mutairi, who has asked permission to camp with Salim for a few days; "F" is my privy tent.

Very peaceful and quiet it all is—and I am not expected.

Suddenly we are seen, and there is much running to and fro, and carrying of *dushaks* and camel saddles from the women's quarters of Salim's tent to mine. Carpets and *galíns* are quickly unrolled, the tent partitions (*gata*) are fixed in place, and by the time the car draws up in front of my tent, everything is ready to give me welcome.

* Bin Jiluwi died on 31st October, 1935. He was according to Arab standards an undoubtedly great man, and a man of extraordinary courage. He was one of the twenty-three paladins who helped to seize Riyadh with Bin Sa'ud when the latter won his kingdom, but he was unfortunately a man without a spark of softness or mercy in his make-up.

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362. The number of tent ropes which support a tent in front and rear depend on the number of poles the tent has. Opposite each pole there will be two ropes, one in front and one behind, so that a tent of three poles will have six ropes (three on either side). Apart from these front

WELL-TO-DO, TWO-POLED BADAWIN TENT

(Plan)

NOTE.—In Eastern Arabia the *Rahi'a* (the men's portion of the tent) is always at the eastern end.

In a stone or mud house the men's portion is known as Al Diwāniyah.

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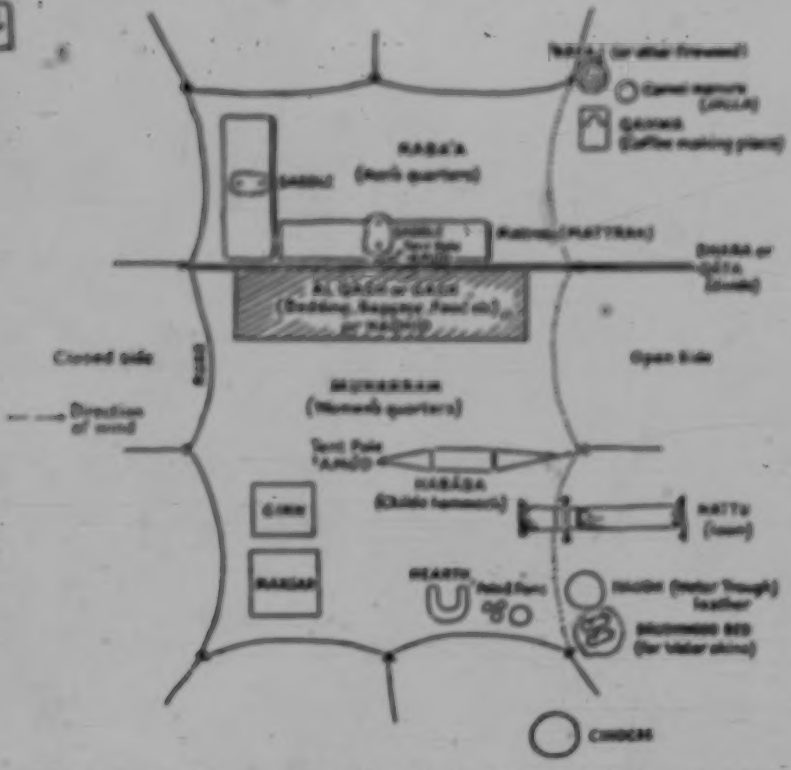

and rear ropes, the two ends of the tents are kept stretched out taut by six other ropes, three at each end.

On the reverse side of each tent and stretching well round so as to shut in the two open ends, and with enough material to spare to close them at night from the front, are two long stretches of cloth known as

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342 462 (1) "Spread out the tent *ya 'aiyál*" (O my people) (from its rolled up position when taken off the camel's back).
(2) "Stretch out the ropes *ya auládi*" (O children) (so that they are at right angles to the tent).
(3) "Anchor the rope ends in the ground *ya fulan wa fulan*" (O So-and-So).
(4) or "Drive in the pegs and wind the ropes round them *ya Nasir*."
(5) "Tighten the ropes *ya Hussa, ya Wadha*."
(6) "Take a pull on the end ropes *ya Marzuk, ya Nasir*."
(7) "Affix the *majadim*" (front-side, support-poles.) This is done on side away from wind.
(8) "Raise the centre poles"—the men's job.
(9) "Raise the back side poles and remaining end side poles."
(10) "Now lay to and take a pull at all the ropes once more."
(11) "Now *rawwagu al bait*, i.e. attach the *ruag* or back and side curtains, and cover the lower edge with sand to keep them down."
(12) "Now affix the *qáta* or partition curtains."
(13) Lastly, "Spread out the carpet and the *dawáshaks* and get ready the women's and men's portions of the tent". Women's quarters centre and left (*margad al harim*), men's quarters right (*margad al rijál*).

The tent is now fully pitched and the women place their treasures and stores in the centre portion of the tent, including their litters (*maksar, ginn*, etc.), sleeping gear, blankets, food, etc., and transfer to the end compartment the cooking pots, cooking utensils, etc., turning it into a sort of kitchen.

MEN'S PORTION OF THE TENT

352 574 In the men's portion of the tent are then unrolled a well-worn carpet or two, the best *dawáshaks* (mattresses), to sit on, and the master's own camel saddle covered with white or black sheepskin. Pillows (*masanad*) are placed on both sides of this camel saddle, and also behind it for the guest's back to rest on, and generally the place is turned into a neat guest chamber for anyone who may [411] come. The master now hangs up his rifle on a hook attached to the 415 tent pole in the guest chamber, and prepares a fireplace to make coffee 272 in the centre of the floor by digging out a shallow circular hole (*wujár*). This done, he gets out his row of three coffee pots (*dalla*), also a fourth "stock" pot, and lays them alongside the fireplace, together with the *mahmása* (coffee roaster) and *yed al mahmása* (coffee-berry stirrer).

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Last of all he places in position the *shat finajîn* (brass case for coffee cups) alongside the *yed wal hdwan* (brass pestle and mortar), the *mubarrad* (wooden slipper for cooling coffee beans), the *mukhbát* (wooden peg for stirring the hot coffee), the *lifa* (coir piece to stuff into the coffee-pot's spout), and finally the *makhbár* (incense burner). All is now ready to receive a guest, except that the actual coffee beans, the cardamum seed to mix with the coffee, the firewood (*'arfaj* bush) and the *jalla* camel manure (in place of coal) and the drinking water, is round in the women's part of the tent or outside it, and will have to be fetched.

As a guest is seen arriving these last necessities are brought and by the time he sits down, firewood, *jalla*, etc., all are ready to hand.

The scheme of things in a poor Badawin tent is the same, only everything is on a very much more modest scale—in fact, according to his purse.

A man leaning on the guest saddle is said to be *murtachi*; if he leans his back against a cushion (*masnad*), he is said to be *mutasannad*. If he tells a story he sits cross-legged; when eating he kneels on his left knee and sits on his left heel; his eating hand works outside his right upright knee; when he washes his hands he squats with knees wide apart.

WOMEN'S PORTION OF THE TENT

Women and servants (if any) carry all cooking utensils, etc., into the women's apartment and cooking portion of the tent, the heavy baggage and bags containing rice, flour, dates, salt, sugar are stored up against the *ǵdta* curtain dividing the women's from the men's apartments. The camel saddle-bags are then hung up on the tent poles, as well as other odds and ends, including the owner's spare rifle and ammunition. Red *lahdfs* or quilts, which take the place of blankets, are then rolled up and placed on top of the stores, and the woman of the house and her daughter's decorated *maksars* (litters) are placed in a prominent position on the other side of the tent, so as to be seen by passers by.

Not the least important of the women's treasures are the spindles (*maghzal*), with which the womenfolk in their spare time spin camels' or sheep's wool. These they are for ever whirring, whether on the

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(r) *'Assa*—camel stick (made of cane).
(s) *Bakúra*—camel stick (cane).
(t) *Miṣúda*—the small bag made of wool or leather for carrying money, *hail* or small quantities of dates when a man is travelling alone.
(u) *Risan*—camel's halter.

FALCON'S GEAR

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(See Chapter XXVIII on Hawking)

(v) *Burqa*—hawk's hood.
(w) *Wakar al tair*—hawk's stand.
(x) *Dasma al tair*—falconer's glove.

NOTE.—Other articles of furniture connected with a *well-to-do* person's tent are the— 352

Mattrah (plural: *mattarah*)—mattress for guests to sit on.
Mafrash—carpets to spread on floor.

We have also the various forms of firewood found in every tent, rich and poor alike. These are known under the general terms of— 372

Jalla—camel dung.
Hamdh—a pungent-smelling bush giving a fine white ash.
'Arfaj—a well-known bush found all over North-Eastern Arabia.

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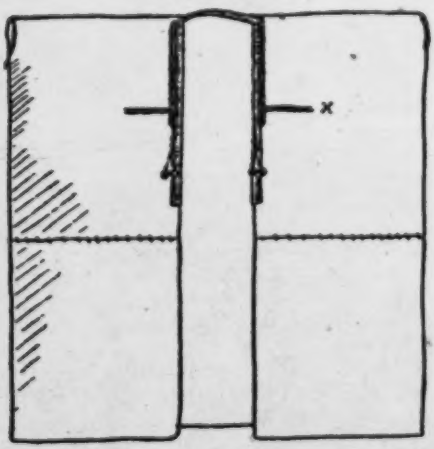
MEN'S CLOTHING



'ABBAH

'Abbah or *Bisht*—made of finely woven sheeps' or camels' wool in two pieces. Texture can be superfine, thin, coarse or thick according to means of weaver. Round neck and down both fronts (shaded portion) is fine gold embroidery ending in a couple of tassels on both sides. The horizontal gold braid (x) indicates that the *'Abbah* is of type worn by shaikhs of Kuwait. Colour—all shades of brown verging on to black.